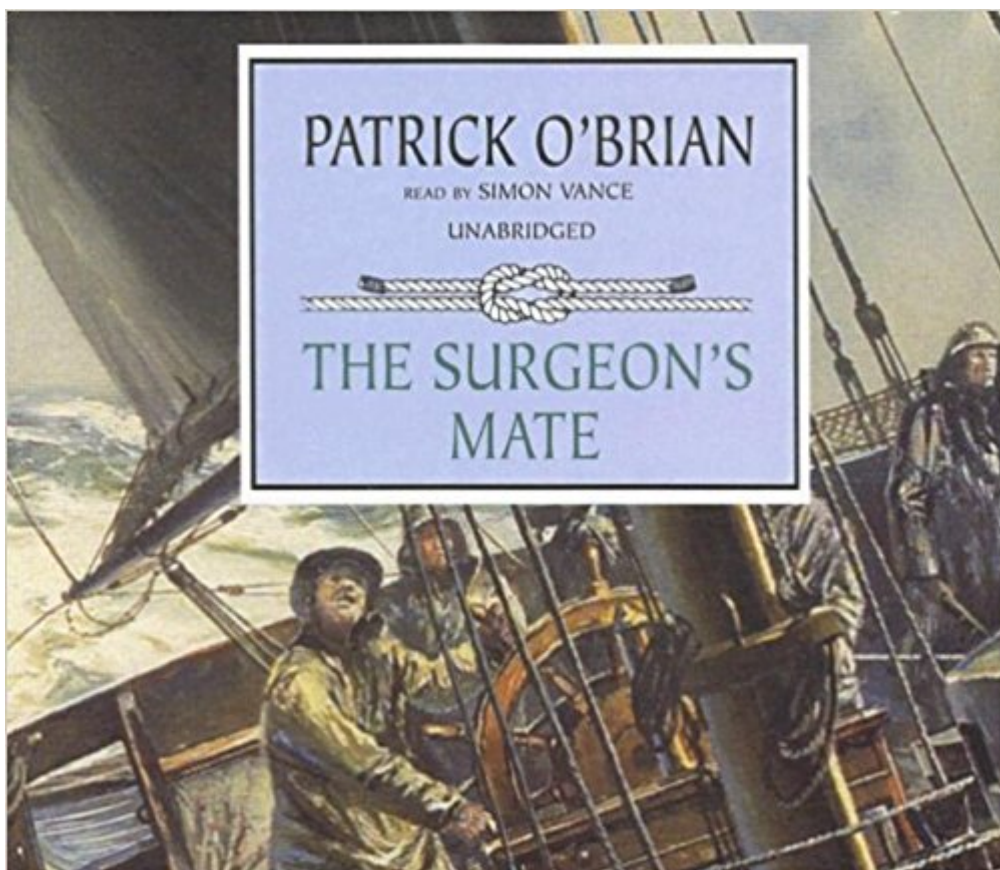


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The Surgeon's Mate (Aubrey-Maturin Series, Book 7)



Synopsis

[Read by Simon Vance] Stephen Maturin's days in British intelligence have gotten him into a whole mess of trouble in *The Surgeon's Mate*, seventh book in Patrick O'Brian's 'Aubrey-Maturin' adventure series. Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin are ordered home by dispatch vessel to bring the news of their latest victory to the government. But Maturin is a marked man for the havoc he has wrought in the French intelligence network in the New World, and the attention of two privateers soon becomes menacing. The chase that follows through the fogs and shallows of the Grand Banks is tense -and unexpected in its culmination. Aubrey and Maturin must endure a foundering ship, capture by the French, and a less than pleasant stay in Paris' infamous Temple Prison. Meanwhile in Paris, Diana Villiers anxiously awaits Maturin's safe return.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

O'Brian's superb series on the early-19th-century adventures of Jack Aubrey, a Royal Navy officer, and his friend Stephen Maturin, Navy surgeon and naturalist, continues with a look at the darker side of Maturin's life: his work in British intelligence. Aubrey, Maturin and Diana Villiers (Maturin's fickle and enigmatic love) are passengers on a packet ship from Nova Scotia to England when two American privateers give chase. They are hunting Maturin, who has compromised U.S. spy networks. The Americans are eluded, and upon reaching England, Maturin sets off to France. Armed with safe conduct papers, he lectures on natural history and installs Villiers in Paris. Suspicious French agents try to bait Maturin but he refuses to be lured into an indiscretion. On his

return to London, Maturin is sent to woo Catalan officers and troops from the French cause to the British. Aubrey provides transport, but despite his best support, including staging a splendid charade chase on the water, the mission takes a nasty turn when their ship founders; seized by the French, Maturin and Aubrey are hauled off to Paris's infamous Temple Prison. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This time out, Captain Jack Aubrey and ship's surgeon Stephen Maturin limp home from America for a brief rest before sailing to the Baltic to subvert the occupying Catalan troops--and then to the Bay of Biscay to run aground. The dashing Aubrey/Maturin naval tales (among others, *The Ionian Mission*--see above) continue to come out in intervals from England, where they are hugely and deservedly popular. Published some years ago in the UK, they've been arriving out of order, so readers find themselves sorting out prequels from sequels. But shipping arrangements do no damage to these polished, historically accurate, and intensely pleasurable tales of the Royal Navy in the Napoleonic era. Anglo-Iberian physician and spy Stephen Maturin is again the linchpin, providing the excuse for his dashing friend Aubrey to flee the mess he has made of his British investments. Aboard H.M.S. *Ariel*, Aubrey transports Maturin to the Baltic, where the doctor will use his linguistic skills and impeccable Catalan separatist credentials to convince Spanish troops holding Baltic islands for Napoleon that they should desert the Corsican monster and throw their lot in with England. The Baltic mission is successful, but the subsequent flight from Scandinavia runs into the rocks off the French coast. The officers are taken prisoner and transported to Paris, where they dine handsomely on meals cooked by a pretty widow as they await execution. Splendid escape. Literate and amusing. -- Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The best nautical historical fiction ever written, period. O'Brian researched exhaustively and infused a lifetime of passion, expertise, and emotion into every volume. The books are not only infinitely readable, they're page burners, each and every one, with laudable character development and environmental description that put you firmly in the midst of what you're reading. There is such a wealth of description, you'll want a dictionary, thesaurus, and an atlas at hand when you dive in. Trust me when I tell you, buy them all, because you won't be able to put them down, and when you're done with one, you'll simply have to have the next.

Once more O'brian has crafted a great sea story . You feel the tension on the quarterdeck as a

chase and later a near disaster occurs. A bit more of this takes place on shore than I would prefer, but still a very entertaining read.

This novel is a personal favorite so far in the series (I've only read nine of them). This is Maturin's story mostly and it's exciting, funny in parts, and it ends beautifully.

Seven books into the series, that O'Brian can still surprise me, intrigue me, and keep both character and story fresh astounds and pleases me to the bottom of my feet. This is why O'Brian receives such high praise and accolades, and it is well deserved. *The Surgeon's Mate* has Aubrey return home after a long separation, only to find himself in financial and legal trouble ashore - a situation apparently as common to sailors in the early 19th century as it is now. Added to this, Cpt. Aubrey has to contend and deal with the consequences of his dalliance in Nova Scotia. Thankfully, Aubrey and Dr. Maturin are quickly dispatched to the Baltic. I will forego the details of the mission lest I spoil the plot - suffice it to say the past of Maturin and Aubrey's service in America catch up with both of them with rather surprising (and delightful) consequences. The title of the book, so often clear to readers as the story unfolds, was here a mystery until literally the final few pages, and was in any case a double-entendre of sorts. That O'Brian, as Aubrey, both enjoy a good play on words, I couldn't help but laugh out loud as I read the final few pages solving the puzzle. As I've said with each previous review on O'Brian's series, the 5 star reviews of his books are very much deserved. Highly recommended.

Slower moving than some other volumes of the series. The title is misleading due to your thoughts from the preceding volume. A must read for any Aubrey/Maturin fan

Patrick O'Brien writes the Best sea novels The rad. Best characters best tactics best sailing best ever. Can't wait to get the next one

A continuation of the greatest series of naval stories ever. The boys are dragged from pillar to post all over the northern hemisphere. Excessive celebration ashore in Nova Scotia with an ambitious young lady leads to some anxious moments later for Jack, while Stephen aspires to a more conventional relationship with Diana. A tense cat and dog chase across the North Atlantic finally sees the boy's return home, but, fortunately for Jack, life as a landsman is brief, and he is off again, dispatched to save the world from despotic French cataclysm. A shipwreck and imprisonment in

Paris rounds out the story, a rousing tale leavened with the (mostly) accidental amorous adventures of the protagonists' new friend, Jagiello. If you do not enjoy this novel, you are a slab-sided scrub and cove. It has a beautifully constructed plot told in wonderful prose by the master of the genre.

THE SURGEON'S MATE, the seventh installment of the Jack Aubrey- Stephen Maturin series about the British naval captain and his surgeon friend at the start of the nineteenth century picks up the story as "Lucky" Jack and the Doctor, along with Diana Villiers (the woman Stephen has long pined for), head back to England after escaping Boston aboard the HMS Shannon and its subsequent defeating of the USS Chesapeake. The story continues with a series of loosely related episodes: Jack's losing himself in an affair with a woman of questionable character in Halifax, his and Stephen's mission to win over a Catalan unit from the French at Grimsholm (now in Finland) and capture the fortress there, and the imprisonment of Jack, Stephen, and Stephen's Swedish assistant Gedymin Jagiello by the French and our heroes' attempt at escape. Stephen's secret life as a super spy for the British Crown also becomes threatened. Throughout the book, the reader might assume the title refers to Jagiello, but it becomes apparent by the end that this is not so. Jagiello, in any case, is an odd character who's not well fleshed out. He seems to be present mostly for comic relief, and late in the book he also serves as a plot device. THE SURGEON'S MATE is the least satisfying of the Aubrey-Maturin novels at this point in the series, at least as a stand-alone novel. Although the last fifty pages are exciting, most of the rest of the novel, while still engrossing--Patrick O'Brian's prose style still pleases--is even more episodic than usual. It reads like a coda to the previous (and superior) book in the series, THE FORTUNE OF WAR (see my review on .com) than it does a cohesive work of its own merit. Still, to any fan of O'Brian's novels, this is not an important consideration.

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